Appl. No. 09/302,552
Amdt. dated December 16, 2004
Reply to Office Action of June 16, 2004

PATENT

AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT

Please replace the abstract with the following:

An electronic document handling system places electronic documents on stacks and "staples" the documents in a stack together. A user selects at least one document and places the selected document(s) onto a stack, The system generates a cover sheet including a table of contents; a title; keywords and/or annotations; and/or controls for: adding or deleting pages or documents from the stack, changing cover sheet contents, and/or controls for "stapling" the stack. An electronic file including the cover sheet data electronically represents a stapled stack. The stack can be secured by encryption with a user or system supplied key or password. The system computes a cryptographic checksum for the stack of documents and affixes the user's or the system's digital signature to the cover sheet. After stapling, the stack or a file representing the stack is stored in a stack database or file structure.